

The Claims:

Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application.

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein the background material includes a paint layer, further wherein the first surface of the background material is defined by a first surface of the paint layer and the second surface of the background material is defined by the second surface of the paint layer.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein the base portion, the wall portion and the interface region are integrally formed with each other.
5. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74, further comprising a protective layer adjacent to the second surface of the background material.
6. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein the background material has a single hue.
7. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein the background material is opaque.
8. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 1 wherein a first portion of the background material has a first hue and a second portion of the background material has a second hue different than the first hue.
9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

11. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein at least a portion of the background material is black.

12. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 74 wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 1 wherein the background material includes a flexible sheet adhesively bonded to the base portion and/or the wall portion.

15. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 1 wherein the background material includes an elongated strip.

16. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 1 wherein a perimeter of the background material on the wall portion has an elliptical shape.

17. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 1 wherein the base portion has a generally circular shape and the wall portion has a generally conical lower portion and a generally cylindrical upper portion.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 73 wherein the background material has a single hue.

20. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 18 wherein a first portion of the background material has a first hue and a second portion of the background material has a second hue different than the first hue.

21. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 73 wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

22. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 73 wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 18 wherein the background material includes a flexible sheet adhesively bonded to the base portion and/or the wall portion.

25. (Withdrawn) The vessel of claim 18 wherein the background material includes an elongated strip.

26. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 73 wherein the base portion has a generally circular shape and the wall portion has a generally conical lower part adjacent to the base portion and a generally cylindrical upper part adjacent to the lower part.

27-72. (Cancelled)

73. (Previously Presented) A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:

a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;

an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second

region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and

a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being configured so that the entire first surface of the background material in the base portion and in the first region of the wall portion is visible through the second region of the wall portion from the exterior region, wherein the second region of the wall portion is optically transmissive and does not contain a portion of the background material between the opening and the base portion.

74. (Previously Presented) A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:

a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;

an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and

a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being configured so that at least approximately the entire first surface of the

background material in the base portion and in the first region of the wall portion is visible through the second region of the wall portion from the exterior region.

75. (Previously Presented) A vessel for observing a chemical substance, comprising:

- a base portion having an outer surface and an inner surface;

- an optically transmissive wall portion projecting away from the base portion and having an inner surface, an outer surface, a first region, and a second region opposite the first region, the outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an exterior region, the inner surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion defining an interior region, the interior region being configured to contain the chemical substance and having an opening configured to removably receive the chemical substance; and

- a background material having a first surface facing toward the interior region and a second surface facing away from the first surface, the background material being positioned between the inner and outer surfaces of the base portion and the wall portion, the background material being positioned in the first region at a first distance spaced apart from the base portion and being absent from the second region at a second distance spaced apart from the base portion, the second distance being at least approximately equal to the first distance.

76. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein the background material includes a paint layer, and wherein the first surface of the background material is defined by a first surface of the paint layer and the second surface of the background material is defined by the second surface of the paint layer.

77. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein the base portion, the wall portion, and the interface region are integrally formed with each other.

78. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75, further comprising a protective layer adjacent to the second surface of the background material.

79. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein the background material has a single hue.

80. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein the background material is opaque.

81. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein at least a portion of the background material is white.

82. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein at least a portion of the background material is black.

83. (Previously Presented) The vessel of claim 75 wherein the background material covers at least approximately the entire base portion.